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FROM THE BROOKLYN PAPERS

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The Brooklyn Paper

Including The Brooklyn Heights Paper, Carroll Gardens-Cobble Hill Paper, DUMBO Paper, Fort Greene-Clinton Hill Paper and Downtown News



Brooklyn's REAL newspapers

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POWER BROKERS

Community groups seek inside track to Ratner bucks

By Jess Wisloski

The Brooklyn Papers

Two organizations that have been meeting with Forest City Ratner officials over a community benefits agreement tied to Atlantic Yards may be rewarded with jobs if the basketball arena, office tower and apartment high-rise plan gets government approvals.

Members of both BUILD (Brooklyn United for Innovative Local Development) and the New York chapter of ACORN (Alliance of Commu-

nity Organizations for Reform Now), which helped draft the Forest City Ratner plan, say they are already providing to the developer services for which they could later be hired, acting as community gateways to jobs and housing.

Ratner plans to build Atlantic Yards on 24 acres of public and private property bounded by Dean Street and Flatbush, Atlantic and Vanderbilt avenues in Prospect Heights.

James S. Ratner, president of Forest City Ratner, announced at a public meeting on Nov. 29 that he hoped to bring ACORN on as the community's sponsor once the city's Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) granted his company the agreements connected to the construction of affordable housing on the site.

Carol Abrams, an HPD spokeswoman, said her agency requires a community sponsor in any cases where developers are granted tax abatements or relief that is paid for by city taxpayers. That group, she said, is chosen at the developer's discretion.

HPD entrusts the chosen community group with marketing and leasing of the affordable housing component, but still monitors the administration of the lottery-style application process through which tenants are selected for the affordable housing. As proposed, Ratner's project would include 2,000 units of tax-abated housing and 4,500 units in total.

But at the Nov. 29 public meeting, the motives of both ACORN, a nationwide organization of low- and moderate-income families, and BUILD, a community group formed for the express purpose of finding jobs from the Atlantic Yards project, were called into question.

An audience member asked if members of the two groups were getting paid by Forest City Ratner

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Library to get \$16M makeover

By Jess Wisloski

The Brooklyn Papers

The Brooklyn Public Library is undertaking a \$16 million, 18-month reconstruction of its Central Branch at Grand Army Plaza.

Library patrons, be warned. As soon as January, readers arriving at the library on Eastern Parkway at Flatbush Avenue will find construction equipment sheds obscuring the grand entrance.

But although the library may look off-limits, it will be open during normal hours, despite commencement of the project, which includes construction of an underground auditorium that has been in the works since 1912.

On Dec. 16, library directors and trustees gathered to host a community forum addressing concerns local residents

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Piano man, all dressed in red

In Dyker Heights, where Christmas always seems a little bit brighter, Santa takes a turn at the piano for this display at 1054 82nd St.

The Brooklyn Paper / Eric M. Margolis



Adam Kuban, who operates a Web site called SliceNY.com, enjoys some brick-oven pizza at Franny's on Flatbush Avenue at St. Mark's Place.

NORMAN'S CRY

'Hynes wants to make politics illegal'

By Jotham Sederstrom

The Brooklyn Papers

Characterizing two former judicial candidates as "a bunch of disgruntled losers," attorneys for Assemblyman Clarence Norman Jr. maintained that when the party bosses demanded both nominees either ante up for favored campaign vendors or forget the party's nomination, he was only engaging in run-of-the-mill "hardball" Brooklyn politics.

And that much is still legal, the lawyers said

at a pretrial hearing in Supreme Court, Downtown, on Monday.

"The politics of Brooklyn is a complicated business," said Mark Baker, an attorney for Norman, during a 20-minute hearing in which the court dropped an indictment against Norman on the basis that the Brooklyn Democratic Party bosses' conduct is constitutionally protected.

"It may not be nice," said Baker. "It's hardball, but it's not illegal."

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Clarence Norman

Sources: Capano to quit Boro Hall post

By Jotham Sederstrom

The Brooklyn Papers

Sources say a Republican City Council hopeful from Bay Ridge will resign from his position as a senior advisor to Borough President Marty Markowitz.

Robert Capano, who was hired by

Markowitz's predecessor, Howard Golden, in 1999, told The Brooklyn Paper on Friday. "The answer is I haven't resigned."

But a Markowitz spokeswoman, Jocelyn Aframe, said, "We understand Bob is exploring his options. In the meantime, he will continue to fulfill his obligations here at Boro Hall."

Under Markowitz, who took office in 2002, Capano was promoted to the position of senior advisor for community relations and legislative affairs, a role in which his responsibilities include overseeing the borough's 18 community boards while acting as a liaison to its elected officials and civic groups.

See BEEP AIDE on page 11



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THIS WEEK:
New theater festival in DUMBO

GO Brooklyn begins on page 5

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PARENT

Positive vibes best for dealing with ex

Q: My 4-year-old nephew likes to play with Barbies dolls and wear high-heel shoes. How can we discourage this?

—an uncle

A: With preschool boys, there's already enough behavior that we'd be squashed: Don't add dolls and fancy shoes to the list.

Insist that a 4-year-old boy stop playing with Barbies and guess what, he'll want to do most.

Whether little boys don plastic necklaces, play house with dolls or try on silly scarves, it's developmentally inappropriate to interfere with their choices, experts say. Just sit back and enjoy the imaginative show.

"This is normal," says family therapist Michael Gurian, author of "Boys and Girls Learn Differently" (Bantam Books, 2002). "Don't involve yourselves in it."

Gurian, who runs an educational training organization, suggests that adults concerned about their child's choices need to tune into their behavior. Separate what's your issue and what is the child's issue.

As yourself: Is this a problem in the classroom, the child, or just an adult's opinion?

Over his decades-long career as a pediatrician, T. Berry Brazelton, MD, received many letters from parents and grandparents who were worried with their sons wanted to play with dolls or dress up in girl's clothes.

"Worries won't do any good," Brazelton says in "Touchpoints: Growing G" (Penguin Publishing, 2002). "Whatever their sexuality turns out to be, you cannot change it, and it will need to be a behavior that's age-appropriate." The behavior, he says, is short-lived and has little bearing on sexual identification.

At age 3, children start to choose same-gender friends, and girls come up with playgroups of their own, such as "No boys allowed."

Preschoolers need opportunities to play with boys and girls, and to choose from an array of toys and dress up with a variety of textures and bright colors. As social pressures increase, gender roles become more clearly defined by about first grade. Go to www.gurian.com. If loved ones interfere in a preschooler's developmental experimentation, he may feel anxious and show a low level of interest in behavior. Instead, kids need the unconditional love of their parents and caregivers.

One grandmother recalls how her granddaughter loved to walk around in her own grandfather's high heels. But the family didn't make an issue of it, and the child soon lost interest in fancy footwear.

From parents: Expand dress-up options to include capes, floppy hats, belts and vests. Allow boys to play with dolls, just as girls get to play with dolls.

In a similar scenario, one grandmother expressed concern that when her 6-year-old grandson visited, he wanted her to put red lipstick on and kiss him on the cheek. Is "serious" or a game?

Just like it's appropriate for boys to play with a variety of dress-up clothes, she says, it's healthy for a 6-year-old boy to find a special way to attach to his grandmother. Relish the bond the boy is trying to create. Before long, he'll be wiping the kisses or dashing off to avoid them.

Remember that children need physical affection, says Will Gitterman, author of "California's 1000 Ways to Raise a Boy's Emotional Intelligence" (Conari Press, 2000).

Many parents are afraid to show affection to their sons, Glemon says. That sends a

Parent-to-Parent



By Betsy Flagger

harmful message to boys: "You're not supposed to be affectionate."

If a grandmother decides to take away this bond, then the child might think: "Oh, there's something wrong with me. Grandma doesn't love me."

"Grandmother, Father, teacher, should avoid shaming and overbearing during the holidays," says Stephan Poulder, psychologist and author of "Father Your Son: How to Become the Father Your Child Needs" (McGraw-Hill, 2004). Kids need downtime; they don't always need to be racing to family gatherings on Mom's or Dad's schedule at all times.

If you have tips or a question, call our toll-free hotline any time at 1-800-827-1092 or e-mail us at 2tips@at.net.

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New pre-K seeks students



Max Amato, 2, works on a puzzle with teacher Renee Silverberg at the Better Brooklyn Children's Academy pre-school.

By Jess Wisloski

The Brooklyn Papers

Better Brooklyn Children's Academy has a problem not frequently seen among private preschools — too many empty seats.

With three brightly colored rooms in its new Brooklyn child-care center on Pierpoint Street at Clinton Street in Brooklyn Heights, and only eight students, they've just had to make-do with the excess of toys, shiny, jelly-finger-paints, paper posters, unused coats and classmate photos.

A large backroom that was designed to accommodate up to 12-2- and 3-year-olds has been turned into a storage-TV

room, where a Christmas tree is set safely out of the grasp of tiny hands on a red Formica table.

The room for "threes and fours" has two dozen cots stacked up in a corner, and has become the nap room, while the tiny kids nap in the room that got the space designed for the "big kids" — with counting charts, flash cards and word posters.

all to themselves.

The faculty of the new preschool did their best to boost student enrollment by holding open houses in the fall and bringing their first term, which began with only two students in September, to a close, and spread word about the school, which is tucked inside a brownstone at 112 Pierpoint.

Even though the organization — the school is run by Better Brooklyn, a community group geared towards youth programs — is equipped to handle up to age 5 and has two certified teachers on staff, the current enrollment is mainly 2- and 3-year-olds.

"We're really trying to create a well-balanced education," said Bertha Lewis, executive director of Better Brooklyn. The school's parent relations representative, Joy Doss, agreed.

"I'm sure we'll start to spill over," she said.

"She always tries to mimic what she learns in school," said Lisa Gomez, Jessie's mom.

"Come on sweetie, we have to go home," Rubin said to Jessie, who refused and continued running in circles.

"She never wants to go," he said.

POWER...

Continued from page 1

for their support of the question, instead saying, "Why don't you ask them yourself?"

Stuckey balked, and refused to answer the question, instead saying, "Whatever do you ask them yourself?"

A chorus of boos came from the ACORN and BUILD volunteers who quickly packed up their belongings. Afterward, Stuckey told The Brooklyn Papers he didn't answer the question because, "It was insulting. Of course, BUILD and ACORN not getting paid."

Bertha Lewis, Brooklyn's director for ACORN, called the accusation ridiculous. "We're not asking for money," she said. "We're asking for what's right."

Lewis told The Papers, "It just says to me, 'This is exactly why people think stuff boils down to race and class.' It's like, how dare you?"

"We got paid what we were asked to do, and that's what our name means, it that you can imagine. We're gonna be famous!" she said, referring to the 50 percent affordable housing, compared to the typical 20 percent found in typical modern developments with similar incentives, that Ratner has agreed to include in Atlantic Yards.

"The cry for 80-20 will never be heard again," Lewis said.

Patti Hagan, a Prospect Heights resident and ardent anti-Atlantic Yards activist, said she was suspicious of BUILD and ACORN's relationship with Ratner since they are the primary negotiators for the community.

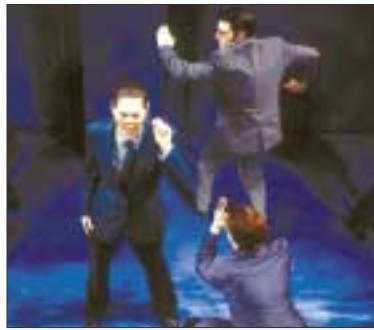
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The Brooklyn Papers' essential guide to the Borough of Kings

December 25, 2004



Take flight

DUMBO's new 'Under the Radar' fest aims to put cutting-edge productions on tour

By Paulanne Simmons
for The Brooklyn Papers

Mark Russell left his position as artistic director of Manhattan's acclaimed venue PS 122 last June, after 21 years, but that doesn't mean he is any less passionate about promoting edgy, innovative work that breaks the bounds of traditional theater.

The curtain will rise on his collaboration with Arts at St. Ann's — "Under the Radar," a four-day mini-festival starting Jan. 7.

The festival, which he produced with Arts at St. Ann's artistic director Susan Feldman, will run through Jan. 10, primarily at the St. Ann's Warehouse in DUMBO and in a few additional locations. Russell chose those days because they coincide with the Association of Performing Arts Presenters' Annual Members Conference in Manhattan.

"These people decide what tours. I wanted them to have a chance to see this work," Russell told GO BROOKLYN.

"Under the Radar" features a selection of performances by artists and companies that Russell expects will soon move on the radar.

"Many of these shows go on tour to places like San Francisco and Houston where they play in very small, alternative spaces — that's real contemporary theater," said Russell. "I look for work that speaks to me, that hits me in the gut, that challenges me, that changes my perception of theater and the world."

"I want New Yorkers to see these pieces. I think it will be kind of fun to see three or four pieces in a day," he said. "In one weekend, you can see the cream of the crop

THEATER

"Under the Radar" runs Jan. 7-10 at various venues in Manhattan and Brooklyn. Tickets for the festival pass are \$15 to \$25. A \$40 "Under the Radar" festival pass provides admission to all shows and includes a \$10 discount to count to all off-site performances. Shows are presented on a rotating schedule. St. Ann's Warehouse is at 32 Avenue A between Fourth Street and DUMBO. For more information, call (718) 834-8774 or visit www.artsatstanns.org.

some of our most innovative theater artists, I wanted to create a buzz around them."

The festival kicks off with Cynthia Hopkins' "Accidental Nostalgia," which was presented at St. Ann's Warehouse last season and will have an extended run there this January.

"I wanted to have the first version of 'Accidental Nostalgia,'" said Russell. "It was originally going to be at PS 122, but it need more resources than we could provide."

Accompanied by her alt-country band Gloria Delux, playing a blend of garage rock, honky-tonk and cabaret music, against a videocon by Jim Findlay and Jeff Siegel, Hopkins tells a story of a woman, a spin-off neurologist, amnesiac, wanderer and Sufi. She draws on both her imagination and her childhood in Georgia to create this fantastic tale.

Russell calls Marc Bamuthi Joseph's "Word Becomes Flesh" a "compelling, heart-wrenching work about his process of becoming a father." Joseph is a spoken-word performer and dancer. He has been seen on HBO's "Def Poetry Jam," where he has demonstrated his ability to combine language with movement.

Heriberto Siguenza's "Cantinflas" is one of Mexico's most sold-out shows from the Los Angeles-based Cuban Clash, said Russell, who called Siguenza "an incredible mime." Performing in both Spanish and English, Siguenza pays tribute to the late Mario Moreno, (stage name Cantinflas) who was the "Charlie Chaplin of Mexico."

In "The Civilians," "Gone Missing," a contemporary drama, the cast of actors tell stories about things lost and found. The show features Michael Friedman's music, which Russell said sounds like what would happen if "Gatz did a musical cabaret."

For more details on Ethel's "Streaming Ethel" comes "from left field." The string quartet blurs the boundaries between classical, jazz, rock, blues and other musical styles. Which may be why Russell — who says he "wanted something that would clear the palate, something really different" — chose to present it.

There are many who consider F. Scott Fitzgerald's "The Great Gatsby" to be the great American novel. The experimental theater group Elevator Repair Service tackles the novel, reading every single word of it, in "Gatz" [at The Performance Garage, 33 Wooster St., (212) 529-3530].

As Russell explains in a show, "A guy comes into an office setting obsessed with reading 'The Great Gatsby.' People around him begin inhabiting the characters." "Gatz" will be read in two parts.

The Foundry Theater takes on another literary icon, Fyodor Dostoevsky's "Crime and Punishment," in "K.I. Fever: Crime."

At The Freight Entrance Theater, 208 W. 37th St. in Manhattan, (212) 868-4444. Performed in Russian and English, the show de-



picts the last moments of Katerina Ivanovna, a minor character in the Russian novelist's work.

"I wanted to give a peek at some of the work that's going on around the world that we never see in this country," said Russell. "Oksana Myrina's performance is a tour de force."

Big Dance Theater's "Plan B" [at the DUMBO Stable, 16 Main St. at Water Street, (718) 222-5050] features video tapes of Richard Nixon and the biography of Kaspar Hauser, famous wild child of 19th-century Germany (a foundling, who, it was rumored, came from a royal lineage) with the choreography of Annie-B Parson.

"I wanted to give everyone a chance to see the work of Big Dance," said Russell.

In fact, Russell wants New Yorkers to see all eight pieces and "to participate in the whole festival."

Said Russell, "That's why we made everything low cost ... friendly and festive."

What's new: As part of the "Under the Radar" theater festival, (clockwise from top left) Elevator Repair Service will read every word of F. Scott Fitzgerald's famous work in "Gatz"; the cast of six in "Gone Missing" will perform 30 Dec. at The Civilians Theater combines the stories of Richard Nixon and 19th century German wild child Kaspar Hauser in "Plan B"; and Herbert Siguenza pays tribute to the Charlie Chaplin of Mexico in "Cantinflas."

ART



Tunnel vision

"City Depths," an exhibition of photographs by Henrik Krueger and Stephen Schuster now on display at Brooklyn Public Library's Central branch, examines the New York City subway system.

Over the last 50 years, Krueger, whose photograph, taken Dec. 20, 1960, is shown above, has focused on the relationship of diverse riders to one another and to their environment. Schuster, meanwhile, is drawn to the dark, largely unexplored tunnels through which the trains travel.

"City Depths" is on display in the Grand Lobby through Jan. 30. Library hours are Tuesday through Thursday, 10 am to 9 pm; Friday and Saturday, 10 am to 6 pm; closed on Mondays. The exhibition is free and open to the public at Grand Army Plaza. For more information, visit www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org or call (718) 230-2100.

— Lisa J. Curtis

EVENT

Starry night

At midnight on Dec. 31, the Prospect Park Alliance will set off its 23rd annual fireworks

show over the Soldiers and Sailors Monument arch at Grand Army Plaza.

Admission is free. All that's required to enjoy the show, designed by Zambelli Fireworks Manufacturing Company, is to dress warmly and bring a hot (non-alcoholic) drink — and a friend for smooching at midnight. Event organizers advise taking public transportation to the plaza, with best viewing inside the park on Park Drive. Enter at Grand Army Plaza, Garfield Place and Third Street on Prospect Park West.

For more information, visit www.prospect-park.org or call (718) 965-8999 ext. 311.

— Lisa J. Curtis

ART

Gallery opens

Luria "LB" Brown (pictured with Borough President Markowitz) celebrated the opening on Dec. 14 at Clinton Hill's Clinton Hill Simplicity Art Gallery.

The first exhibit in Brown's new space is "Untold: A Madam Voyage," with works by Brooklyn painters and sculptors from South of the Navy Yard

Artists (SONYA) and the Brooklyn Waterfront Artists Coalition (BAC) as well as those that have exhibited in her other space Clinton Hill Simplicity Art Gallery at 583 Myrtle Ave. at Clinton Hill.

"On behalf of Brooklyn, I congratulate Luria LB Brown on adding to our arts renaissance in a way that is deeply aware of the rich artistic history of the neighborhood and the borough — and that gives all the great Brooklyn artists of today a chance to become the legends of tomorrow that they deserve to be," Markowitz said.

Clinton Hill Art Gallery is located at 154a Vanderbilt Ave., at Myrtle Avenue. For more information and gallery hours, call (718) 852-0227.

— Lisa J. Curtis

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BROOKLYN Bites

Neighborhood Dining Guide

This week:
ATLANTIC AVENUE

Bacchus

409 Atlantic Ave. at Bond Street, (718) 852-1572
(AmEx) Entrées: \$5-\$18.

Heavy truck traffic may trundle by Bacchus, but that doesn't dampen the bouncy atmosphere inside this tiny restaurant, where the menu is as short as a Lacoste. The dining room is quieter and the tree-lined back patio is romantic. Start with the newest item on the menu, "friend au fromage," rolled Swiss cheese.

"It's like macaroni and cheese, only no macaroni," says David Pacholski, who's not sure he doesn't think that anything in New York is "kidding."

The lunch menu is standard French fare, with omelets, quiches and "croque monsieur" (the French steak au poivre, grilled tuna, lamb, pork tenderloin, rabbit, duck, coq au vin, moriblock and more). For dinner, Young wings dominate the menu; the brunch is served Saturday and Sunday. Open daily.

Boudin Teen

150 Atlantic Ave. at Hoyt Street, (718) 855-5555
(Cash only) Entrées: \$5-\$12.

Despite its name, this family-owned restaurant has made Atlantic Avenue its home for the past 17 years (Boudin teen means "young" in French). It's been a favorite of Williamsburg Hall's 2001 "Mom and Pop Business of the Year."

Boudin Teen is known for and wide for their signature food: French bread.

Signature dishes include "lambjan," a Middle Eastern lamb pizza, and the "hansa," a Moroccan lamb and mint pie. Soups are served with bread, rice or cake served with yogurt and honey. True to its name, the restaurant has garden seats year round under a heated tent. Open daily for lunch and dinner.

Brawta Caribbean Cafe

347 Atlantic Ave. at Hoyt Street, (718) 855-5515
www.brawta.com; also 2 Park Slope, at 447 Second Ave., 15th Street, (718) 238-5494
DC, Disc, MC, Visa) Entrées: \$10-\$20.

This small Caribbean restaurant offers flavorful dishes in huge portions. Try the spicy curried shrimp or the jerk chicken. The jerk chicken is the new addition to the menu — mahi mahi in batter sauce. Brava is BYOB, but don't worry about other fresh ingredients: The jerk chicken, for instance, is a sweet combination of ginger and pineapple, sorrel (a medicinal fruit juice) and the recently added peanut butter.

The Park Slope outpost is closed for the winter; Catering available for all dining.

Open daily from 11 am to 10 pm.

Jolie Restaurant

320 Atlantic Ave. at Hoyt Street, (718) 488-0777
www.jolierestaurant.com; also 2 Park Slope, at 447 Second Ave., 15th Street, (718) 238-5494
DC, Disc, MC, Visa) Entrées: \$10-\$20.

From the art displayed on the walls to sauteed

bacon and contemporary-style chandeliers, Jolie Restaurant is all that's it's very pretty. In

addition to the main dining room or the new upstairs room, the restaurant has a garden room for a

private, temporarily closed on Tuesdays.

Waterfront Ale House

155 Atlantic Ave. at Henry Street, (718) 522-3794; www.waterfrontalehouse.com (AmEx, DC, MC, Visa) Entrées: \$11-\$21.

Since 1989, Sam and Karen's Waterfront Ale House has been a pub stalwart, offering 19 beers on tap and 65 different bottles. But with the help of local chef Jim Takacs, they are able to go well beyond the ale house status.

Sam's Waterfront Ale House is a great place to stop for a beer or a sandwich, but diners can also sample more sophisticated fare like version

of the house's signature dish, a burger made from Kobe beef. Try any of Waterfront's award-winning house beers from local breweries. All menu items are smoked in-house. Open daily for lunch and dinner.

Zoila

73 Hoyt St. at Atlantic Avenue, (718) 596-5438
(Cash only) Entrées: \$5-\$25.

Owner Martha Johnson wants her customers to forget that they are at a restaurant when they come to Zoila.

"For those of us accustomed to the size of New York apartments, the bright-colored room with only one window is like a vacation," she says.

Johnson serves what she calls "new American food" — Latin, Asian and Mediterranean-influenced dishes. The menu includes a "hot dog" dish which is served on focaccia and it includes a marinaded chicken breast, basil oil, tomatoes and fresh lettuce. The "hot dog" is topped with the "Mezze" plate, a combination of hummus, pesto orzo, feta cheese and stuffed grape leaves served with pita bread. Open Mondays through Saturdays from 7:30 am to 7 pm.

Full review available at



Abbreviation Key: AmEx = American Express, DC = Diner's Club, Disc = Discover Card, MC = MasterCard, Visa = Visa Card



Sweetbread champagne with sauteed spinach and potatoes at Jolie.

All that sparkles

For New Year's, impress your friends with great champagnes and sparkling wines

By Ian Wolff
For The Brooklyn Papers

The temperature has dropped, signaling that it's New Year's Eve — when friends and family come together to share warmth and cheer — approaches. Chances are, some form of sparkling wine will be poured.

Traditional champagne might be the first thing that comes to mind — after all, it dates back to 17th-century France. It's often raised in toasts at wedding receptions, and it's what's in your glass when the bell drops on New Year's.

The Russian Czars appreciated it, and even Madame de Pompadour, mistress of King Louis XV of France, liked champagne. "Champagnes" is the only wine that leaves a wine beautiful after drinking," she said.

Today champagne shares the stage with sparkling wines from around the world. If you're shopping for a sparkling wine, it's best to look like Prosecco from Italy or Cava from Spain. You'll find there are sparkling wines from Australia, California — even South Africa.

Since only wines produced in the Champagne region of France can be called "champagne" can be "method," or "classic method" (or a translation thereof) is often used on labels to indicate that a sparkling wine has been made in the fashion of champagne — most importantly, that it was fermented in the bottle. So understanding a little about champagne can go a long way towards understanding the nuances of the vast array of sparkling wines.

Popular myth credits Dom Perignon, a 17th-century Benedictine monk, with the invention of champagne. The method can be attributed to one person. Sparkling wine evolved over time. Cold winters in the Champagne region often caused wine in the cellar to stop fermenting when spring came. Secondary fermentation would start. The yeast from the first fermentation would eat carbonation, which winemakers struggled to avoid. Eventually they realized that the secondary fermentation could be harnessed to make a refreshing and wonderful wine that became known as champagne.

Bottle fermentation is what gives



Pop the cork: On Sunday, patrons of Greene Grape wine store in Fort Greene sampled a '96 Pierre Gimonnet Blanc de Blanc, which has notes of citrus and a subtle finish.

The Brooklyn Papers Group photo

champagne and many sparkling wines their character and individuality. The longer a sparkling wine is allowed to ferment in bottle ("left on the lees") before "degorgement" (when the yeast is removed), the richer and more complex the wine.

After degorgement, the bottle is topped with a sweetened reserve wine

before being recapped. The amount of sweetness is indicated on the label as Extra Brut — extremely dry with virtually no sugar added; Brut (the most common style) — very dry, less than 1.5 percent sugar; Extra dry — which is slightly less dry than Brut; and, increasingly sweet, Sec, Demi-Sec and Doux.

Perfectly frank

Over the past month, Windsor Terrace residents have noticed an unusual sight — people walking around with big hot dogs topped with sauerkraut and mustard or sauerkraut and mustard on buns. Some of them are

The source is Hot Diggity Dog, which has opened on Prospect Park West in November.

"The neighborhood loves us," exclaims owner Billy Grillas (pictured).

The Sheephead Bay native says his family owns the Off Shore Diner in Bay Ridge, and he knew he'd end up doing something with food."

Grillas chose to specialize in hot dogs, because, he says, he's always looking out for the perfect frank. "You can get a burger or a slice anywhere," he says, "but a good dog is hard to find."

"I only use Boars Head all-natural beef dogs, and I make all the toppings myself," he says. The most popular

What to look for

Champagne is no longer just a drink for royalty. You can find vintage champagnes from small estates at less than \$100 a bottle. A champagne can be declared vintage only on years when conditions yield an exceptional harvest, and it must yield entirely of wine from that year.

For example, 1996 was a notable vintage year, and the '96 Pierre Gimonnet Blanc de Blanc (\$55), is a fine example of a vintage vintage champagne that can be had for half the cost of more familiar names like Veuve Clicquot or Roederer. A "blanc de blanc" is made from 100 percent chardonnay grapes. This one has an elegant combination of citrus and a subtle finish. The Pierre Gimonnet spent six years on the lees, and that's evident in both its depth, and its 93 point score in "Wine Spectator" magazine.

But don't limit yourself to considering champagne. There are a number of alternatives at a range of prices. Martini Bruti (\$9), a wonderful Italian "metodo classico spumante" (which translates as "foaming"), is derived from indigenous grapes grown on the Illuminati family estate in northern Abruzzo. Three years on the lees imparts a richness of brioche to this complex sparkling.

Also from Italy, Prosecco is a popular sparkling wine. Its simple — yet refreshing — taste makes it a perfect aperitif. Prosecco undergoes second fermentation in pressurized tanks instead of in the bottle. This is the best deal down: Pisan, at \$11, is a good example. With the light and fruity body typical of Prosecco, Pisan has honey-suckle and ripe peach aromas.

Spain has a celebrated sparkling wine called Cava. After visiting France in the 1800s, a monk introduced the Champagne method to his estate in Penedes. The Raventos family continues a tradition of excellence with L'Hereu de Raventos i Blanc (\$14), a bright, sparkling wine with a pale straw color. Its year spent on lees imparts a delicate, yet balanced, hints of lemon and apple.

Sparkling wine has even made its way to South Africa. Graham Beck has been making it since 1991 at his Robertson Cellar on the Western Cape. In 1994, his sparkling wine was served at the White House's inauguration. The Graham Beck Brut (\$16) spends two years in the bottle and pours with a vigorous sparkle.

The wines mentioned here are only the tip of the iceberg, but with this little information, you'll be able to navigate the bubble at your local Brooklyn wine shop.

Ian Wolff is a manager at The Greene Grape, located at 765 Fulton St. between South Portland Avenue and South Oxford Street in Fort Greene. For more information, e-mail wine@greenegrape.com or call (718) 797-9463.

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- Contract rates for the Brooklyn Classifieds are "rate holders"—no skipped issues permitted.

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Prospect Place, 1, 2, 3 BR apt., asking \$1,400 to \$2,500. Newly renovated, hardwood floors, high ceiling, elevator. Ready Now! Please call broker Lincoln James. (718) 783-2699. www.jamesenterpriserealty.com

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NO BROKER'S FEE. 800 Street, (Brooklyn) 1/2 block from the Avenue. \$750-\$1100. 1 bedroom apartment for rent \$900/mo. plus utilities. Many other available. Call 718-703-4466 or go to www.KingApartments.com

Crown Heights

NO BROKER'S FEE. 800 Street, (Brooklyn) 1/2 block from the Avenue. \$750-\$1100. 1 bedroom apartment for rent \$900/mo. plus utilities. Many other available. Call 718-703-4466 or go to www.KingApartments.com

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NO BROKER'S FEE. 1, 2, 3 & 4 bedroom apartments for rent \$700/mo. each + utilities. Many others available. Call 718-703-4466 or go to www.KingApartments.com

Crown Heights

NO BROKER'S FEE. 800 Street, (Brooklyn) 1/2 block from the Avenue. \$750-\$1100. 1 bedroom apartment for rent \$900/mo. plus utilities. Many other available. Call 718-703-4466 or go to www.KingApartments.com

Flatbush

NO BROKER'S FEE. Kings Highway, (Hubert Place/ Avenue K/Avenue L). Large 1B/1B apartment for rent \$850/mo. plus utilities. Many others available. Call 718-703-4466 or go to www.KingApartments.com

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